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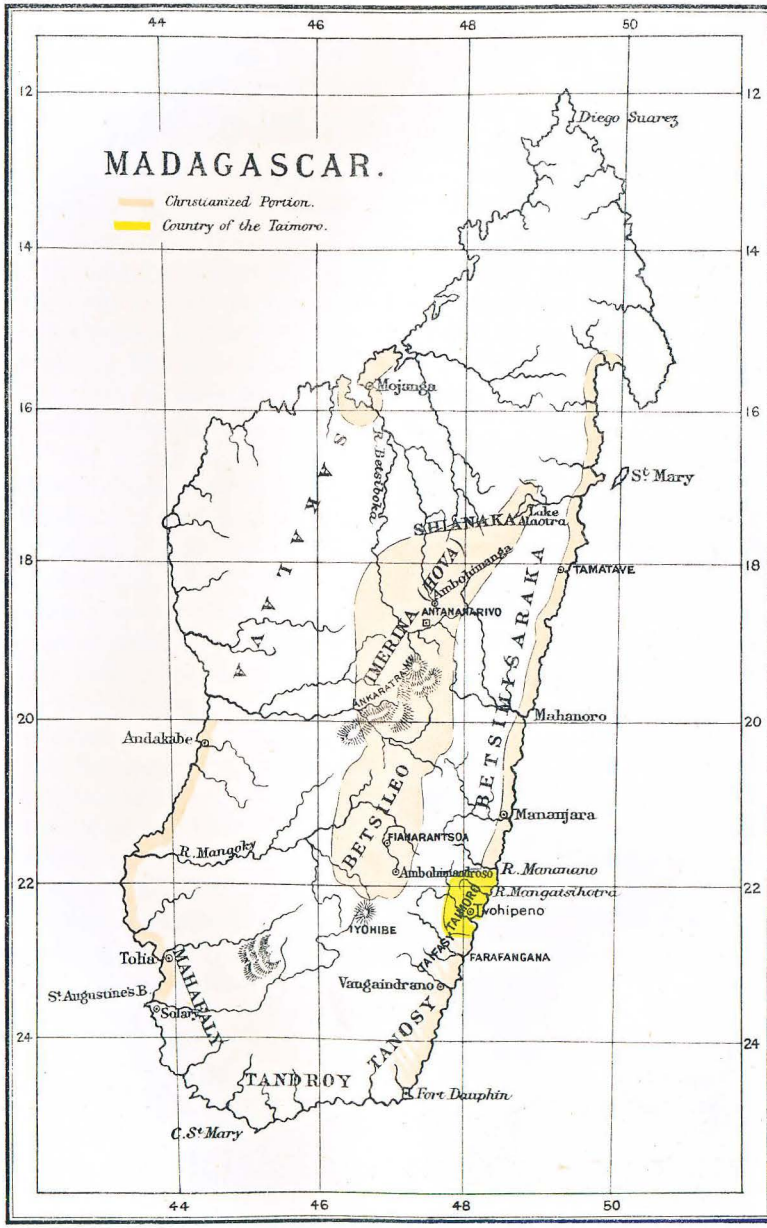

HARRISON & SONS, LITH. ST. MARTINS LANE, W.C.

This map was omitted unintentionally from Vol. XXXIII. but is here inserted for reference to the paper by the Rev. G. A. Shaw F. Z. S. on "the Arab Immigration into S. E. Madagascar Vol. XXXIII. p. 334.

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.*

EDWARD S. M. PEROWNE, ESQ., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following elections took place :—

MEMBERS :—Edmund C. P. Hull, Esq., J.P., Surrey ; Ernest Romney Matthews, Esq., C.E., F.G.S., Bridlington.

The following paper was read by the Author :—

THE ARAB IMMIGRATION INTO SOUTH-EAST MADAGASCAR. By Rev. GEORGE A. SHAW, F.Z.S.

THE SACRED BOOKS, CUSTOMS, AND TRADITIONS OF THE TAIMORO TRIBE.

WHILE all writers on the ethnology of Madagascar are fairly in accord as to the origin of the principal tribes, the Hóva and Bétsiléo, the proximity of Africa has always caused an element of uncertainty to creep into the mind regarding the source from which the many darker-skinned tribes have sprung. Many contend that the coast tribes, the Sàkalàva on the one coast, and the Bétsimisàraka on the other, have a decidedly African cast of feature and formation of cranium ; and this has apparently been borne out by measurements and investigations made by Dr. Hildebrandt in the somewhat limited tract of country through which he travelled. But against this has to be put the fact, that the more perfectly the island is explored, the more convinced are those who are in a position to give an opinion of any value, that the language of the various tribes is one and the same, and that the many varieties in pronunciation and syntax are simply dialectic, and do not represent radically different languages. That an African element is present in the island no one can deny, but it has

* Monday, 20th May, 1901.

never been strong enough to materially influence the social distinctions; nor has there yet been discovered any tribe which is so completely African, either in language or physique, as to leave no doubt in the minds of those who have studied them closely as to this theory of their western origin.

But, strange to say, while the African element has been merged completely into the other tribes, because of the small amount of immigration, and this mostly of slaves, and so wanting the power to make their individuality felt as a separate and distinct community, the Arab is a powerful and unique factor in Malagasy sociology. His influence has been felt in the language strongly enough to dictate the names for the days of the week, the months, and, where such exist, the names of the years, not to mention other words unmistakably Arabic in origin.* He has been, and still is in a more limited degree, the importer of slave labour into the island, his form of boat being the most common in such places as are inhabited by those bold and daring enough to venture out to sea. He has been met with in many outlying and unfrequented spots settled down as a trader, thriving upon the dulness and inertness of the coast tribes, and

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* Days of the week :—

Sunday	...	Alahady	...	Al-áhadu.
Monday	...	Alatsinainy	...	Al-itznàni.
Tuesday	...	Talata	...	Atz-tzàlatzatù (El-t'làte) Mod-Ar.
Wednesday	...	Alarobia	...	Al-arbà'atu.
Thursday	...	Alakamisy	...	Al-chamìsu.
Friday	...	Zoma	...	Al-dschum'atu.
Saturday	...	Asabotsy	...	As-sàbtu.

Months of the year, derived from the names of the constellation of the Zodiac :—

			Mr. Dahle's identifications.
1.	Alahamady	...	Al-hamalu = Aries.
2.	Adaoro	...	Atz-tzauru = Taurus.
3.	Adizaoza	...	Al-dsehauza'u = Gemini.
4.	Asorotany	...	As-saratanu = Cancer.
5.	Alahasaty	...	Al-asadu = Leo major.
6.	Asombola	...	As-sunbulu = Spica in Virgo.
7.	Adimizana	...	Al-mizanu = Libra.
8.	Alakarabo	...	Al-aqrabu = Scorpio.
9.	Alakaosy	...	Al-qausu = Arcus and Sagittarius.
10.	Adijady	...	Al-dsehadiu = Capricornus.
11.	Adalo ...	...	Ad-dalvu = Aquarius.
12.	Alohotsy	...	Al-hutu = Pisces.

flourishing by his superior knowledge and acuteness, not to mention his superabundant cupidity. And in the district watered by the River Màtitànana, in the south-east, he has maintained an independence of, and isolation from, other tribes, while he has developed into a large and powerful community, with traditions, laws, and sympathies distinctly Arabic.

This tribe, called the Taimòro,* from their first settlement *amòrona* ("on the banks of") the Màtitànana, has a history, with customs and traditions that make them peculiarly interesting to the foreigner; and their influence, from causes that will be explained later on, is widespread and powerful among the neighbouring tribes.

The Taimoro at the present day occupy that political division of the country which is under the Governor of Vóhipèno, extending from Andàkana in the south to Tapólo in the north. It is bounded on the west by the River Rianànana (a tributary of the Màtitànana), and stretches as far as Békàtra on the north-west, beyond which is the country of the Tanàla and Tambódihárana, as the various sub-tribes occupying the mountainous slopes of the table-land are called by the coast people. Portions of other tribes are to be found within this boundary, but they are the descendants of those who have come as visitors, in the first instance, or of families that have been driven into this country, as a refuge from enemies, in some of the intertribal wars. In this way the small communities of Taifàsy, Zàfisòro, and Bètsimisàraka within the province of the Taimoro are to be accounted for. These have in the course of years or generations acquired ricefields and plantations, grazing lands and villages, entirely distinct and independent of the Taimoro, and acknowledging no fealty to the Taimoro chiefs.

The Taimoro proper are divided into several sub-tribes or sections, each being apparently the descendants of the individual leaders of the original immigration, and of their slaves or dependents; the former section being called the Mpànombìly or Tómpoménakèly, and the latter the Mènakèly or common people.

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* Variously spelt Taimora, Teimoro, Ntemoro, Antemoro, Antaimoro, and Taimorona, the most common pronunciation being as in the first and the last forms. Literally, the words mean, "There by the side," or "On the banks."

The Mpanombily, the chiefs or lords of the manor and descendants of the old kings, are subdivided into:—

(*a*) Anakàra. (*b*) Taiòny or Antsióny. (*c*) Talaotra or Antalaotra (this, which is the name applied by the Malagasy generally to the Arabs proper, is a name assumed by all the Tompomenakely occasionally). (*d*) Taisàmbo. (*e*) Taitsimaito. (*f*) Taimahàzo.

The Menakely are divided into castes or sub-tribes as follows:—

(*a*) Onjatsy; these are said to have originally come from the north, when the tribe settled in the neighbourhood of Màtitànana. On their arrival, they had the office of Mpanombily, but afterwards the dignity passed from them, because, when called upon to officiate, that is, to kill the cattle or fowls, etc., for the people, they put the tribe to all kinds of inconvenience, and the animals sometimes to unnecessary hardship or torture, by going about their own private work before attending to the duties of their office. (*b*) Taimainty; the fishermen, those who fished with nets. (*c*) Tàimanàja or Antrémanàja; these are said by some to have been the first arrivals in Màtitànana; they are the potters. (*d*) Taibé or Anteibé. (*e*) Taimasìry. (*f*) Taivohitrìndry. (*g*) Zànatseranana; people conquered by the Zafisoro, and given land in this district. (*h*) Tàimanasàra. (*i*) Taivàto; these were originally from the south, where there is still a large tribe of this name; they are doubtless not pure Taimoro, but one of the immigrant tribes. (*j*) Taitsìmatra. (*k*) Tambàhivè. (*l*) Taimànanáno. (*m*) Tailàvakàra.

These names represent simply the largest divisions of the tribe, many of them being derived from the districts they inhabit, or else the districts have received their titles from the name of these sub-tribes; the former I think the most probable. Of them all, the Talaotra appear not only to be the most interesting, but also to have an authority or influence arising from the superstitious reverence for their ancestry accorded to them by the other tribes.

Very little and but uncertain tradition exists among most of the different tribes in Madagascar as to their origin; and even the direction from which their ancestors came is so uncertain that some of the tribes say their forefathers came from the east, and some that they came from the west; and so contradictory are the traditions on this subject, that no reliance can be placed on any account. But all this is other-

wise with the Taimoro, where, although much of their so-called history bears the impress of a folk-lore tale, yet there is no uncertainty in the minds of the people as to their origin; and the accounts I have heard in different sections of the tribe correspond in a remarkable degree. All agree in certain particulars: that their ancestors emigrated from Arabia; that they inhabited a district near Mecca; and that, living in troublous times, they were driven out of their country by enemies.* The usually accepted account of this emigration, which, as I have said, savours strongly of a folk-lore tale, is as follows:—

One day a girl had left the town to fetch water and, while at the well, was surprised and captured by the enemy's scouts, who took her as spoil. (Hereditary enemies are indicated here, not that any war had been declared, or any quarrel existed.) She asked them the object of their visit, and what they were in search of, to which they replied—

"We have come with the intention of making war on this town, so tell us where the road is by which we can enter the town and overcome its defenders."

"No!" she said, "I will not tell you. You may kill me or torture me, but I will not show you now."

They threatened her and cajoled her, but all to no purpose. At last she said:

"If you go up to fight against this town with sword or spear, you will not overcome it; but return whence you came, and I will there tell you how you may become masters of the place."

So they returned and carried this captive maid with them. And when called upon, this was her counsel:—

"Collect together a great number of dogs, take them with you, surround the town, and urge on the dogs to the walls, and you will find that it will be easy to take the town without any fighting."

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* It is known that several tribes of Arabs, as for instance the Emosaids, were in the disturbed time of the eighth century obliged to leave Arabia and seek a new home across the sea. And as Arab traders had found their way down the east coast of Africa and to some of the adjacent islands, there is little doubt that they ventured across the Mozambique Channel, and finding such a fertile land as is presented by the south-east of Madagascar, would eventually make it a home. The historian Masadi. who lived in the tenth century, speaks of an expedition to Cambalu, which, as they started from the neighbourhood of Mozambique, was doubtless Madagascar.

The people were divided for a long time as to what to do, whether to act according to the girl's advice, or not. And when they decided to act as she had said, a difference arose as to the disposal of the maid. Some were for killing her as an incumbrance, others were for sparing her; but at last they agreed to let her live. They caught the dogs, took them with them, surrounded the walls, and urged on the dogs. The inhabitants were so frightened at the unwonted noise and curious on-rush, that they lost their wits. Some threw themselves into the sea; some got into canoes and made off; while the remainder fell panic-stricken into the hands of the enemy. Those who escaped in the canoes were the ancestors of the Talaotra, who made their way to the Màtitànana. It is because of this incident, or supposed incident, that the dog is a tabooed animal with the Talaotra.*

The sub-tribes represented by those in the canoe were the Anakara, Taiony, Taitsimaito, and Taivàndrika. The king who was at the head of the expedition was Andríamàrohàla. But it ought to be mentioned that the Taimoro use the word "king" in a very broad sense, and in the use of the name make no distinction between an hereditary king, an elected tribal chief, or a leader or commander chosen for a single expedition. I may mention, by way of illustrating the broad signification of this word, an incident that came under my notice a short time ago. In the course of an itinerating journey, I met a small company of our school-children enjoying a holiday at Nòsikély, a village some hours' journey from their home. They had made up a party for a few days, and had taken a house for themselves; and when I asked them who had accompanied them to take care of them and see to their food, they told me that before starting they had chosen one of their number, the biggest boy, about 13 years of age as "king," and they did as he commanded them, and he was

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* In connection with this subject, it may be mentioned that even now, if a dog rubs against one of these people, it renders that person unclean. He must go immediately to the river and bathe, and whatever clothes he is wearing next the skin are thrown away, or given to the slaves. If by chance a dog jumps over or passes over the rice, when it is spread in the sun to dry previously to being husked, it is at once thrown away, r given to the slaves. But intercourse with the Hova and other tribes is gradually lessening the hold which these and other customs and *fády* have upon the Taimoro.

responsible to their parents for their well-being. There are very few *children* in Madagascar out of their mothers' arms.

To return to the fugitives in the canoes. After they had started, it is said that there were so many, that they were afraid the canoes would be swamped. But they struggled on, hoping to reach safety; but at last, owing to the weather and darkness, fear took possession of them; a hasty united council was held, and a suggestion was made that all the children should be thrown overboard. A good deal of excitement seems to have arisen on this suggestion; but eventually they agreed to throw away the children, sacrificing them to the general good. This was, on the part of some, not made in good faith, for although the Taivandrika threw overboard their children, all the others simply made a feint of doing so, or dropped stones into the water, so that when they came to land, it was found that although the children of the Taivandrika were all lost, the children of the others were still there. This account is said to be the origin of the proverbial saying among those in the Màtitànana district: "Taivandrika crossing by canoe."

When the Taivandrika discovered how they had been imposed on, they were filled with wrath, and cursed and reviled those who had come with them; and the curse or imprecation they are said to have used is employed still by their descendants when vexed with any of the other tribes. Their curses, however, seem to have rebounded on their own heads, for the Taivandrika are a scattered and wandering people, having no settled territory, and spread over the country of the other tribes. They are also very few in number.

These fugitives in the canoes are said to have landed at a part of the coast near to the spot now occupied by Vangaindràno, in the south; but after making acquaintance with the country and the inhabitants, they said: "We are not able to remain here, for although the country is pleasant and fruitful, yet the people love war; their spears are in constant use, and we shall find no secure place for our wives and children. Let us leave this part at once." Hence they again embarked, and making their way along the coast northward, eventually landed at Màtitànana.

As there were many more men in the expedition than women, they asked for wives from the Onjàtsy, who live a short distance up the Màtitànana, on the south bank. But

doubtless through fear, the Onjàtsy not only would not agree, but in order to frighten them from the district, told them that, among other dangers that awaited them, there was a monster which lived in the river Màtitànana, a man-eating creature, that would eventually destroy them all. In no way disconcerted, the Talaotra, the new-comers, got a bullock and poisoned it—filling it with poison, the account says—and then threw it into the river. The creature ate the carcase and died, the new-comers gaining thereby security for themselves and a certain respect from the Onjàtsy, who admired their cleverness, and acknowledged their superior skill and learning, as shown by their possession of some powerful drug or charm unknown to themselves.

Iròtra, a spot about three miles from the mouth of the Màtitànana, on the north bank of the river, was the first settlement of these people; and there councils were held with a view to the future disposal of the families. It was agreed that the king should live at a place now occupied by the town of Ivàto, in a central position in relation to the other families; the Anakara were to pass to the west, and the Taitsimaito to remain on the east. "For," said they, "the Anakara are so much given to cursing and quarrelling, that we cannot have them on the east of the king; so let them go away to the west, to be easily seen, being between us and the sun." Notwithstanding this division, Andriamarohala never lived at Ivato, but made his home at Ambòabé, when he and his family removed from Irotra. There he lived and died, and is buried in the wood, a little to the south of Mr. Desjardin's trading-post.

Such is the generally accepted account of the immigration of the Talaotra. It doubtless contains a modicum of truth, but around a central fact is woven such a mass of improbability, that its value as authentic history is very much lessened. Beside which, it only accounts for one or two branches of the tribe; and the narrative admits the presence of the Onjàtsy, from whom wives were sought for by the immigrants; and the Onjàtsy are not only equally allied with the Talaotra, Anakara, and Taitsimaito to the Arabs, but have the honour of being the custodians of one of the only two remaining original copies of their sacred book. Hence it is difficult to say whether the immigration spoken of is really the original immigration of the Arab race, or only that of a part, a former company having landed and settled in the same part of the country. Onjàtsy is also the name of a

town on the south bank of the Màtitànana, about two miles from the mouth of the river.

The people at any rate showed a considerable amount of acuteness in their choice of territory, for the district of Màtitànana must be one of the richest, from an agricultural point of view, in this remarkably fertile island. Well watered by the Màtitànana river, the many tributaries of which flow through an extensive and gently undulating country containing about 600 square miles, and also by the Mànanànо river, to the north, not to mention the many small streams which flow into the sea or the lagoons along the coast, there is every facility for rice-growing, one of the most extensive and lucrative employments of the people. Very little of the engineering skill exhibited by the Betsileo in the formation of their rice plantations is required here. The low plains are easily flooded with water, and nothing more is required than little banks to mark the boundaries of each man's possession, and to assist in confining the water necessary for the growth of the rice-plant. The soil is alluvial, and is constantly added to and enriched by the frequent overflowings of the rivers. Even the higher lands are so fertile that a lazy style of cultivation has become the custom. Little if any attempt at manuring is adopted; the ground is simply weeded, the weeds burnt, and without any further digging, the beans or earth-nuts or manioc are planted and left until ripe enough to be gathered. The rice-fields are of two kinds: firstly, those planted in June and July, which resemble the fields in the interior of the island. In the preparation of these, the cattle are made to trample the clods of earth which have been roughly turned over by a spade, until, by the united action of their hoofs and the water retained between the little banks already referred to, a soft smooth mud has been produced. Into this the rice is thrown, and when about six or seven inches high, it is thinned out. All the young plants removed in the course of this process are transplanted into other fields similarly prepared. In these respects, the plan adopted by the Taimoro, and that by the people in the interior, differ. Among the Hova and Betsileo, the rice is sown as thickly as possible in a small patch, and the whole is transplanted, when of the requisite size. In the Màtitànana district it is sown thinly in large plots, and only the superabundance is taken up, the remainder being left *in situ* to ripen.

The other kind of rice-field is made by first burning down

a tract of bush or forest; and then, with a pointed stick, holes are made in the cleared ground, and one or two grains of rice are dropped in each hole. This sowing takes place in January or February, and produces rice having a large and beautifully white grain, but softer and much less nourishing than that grown under water; and although fetching a better price in the market for export, it is less esteemed as a food supply by the natives than the redder grained rice of the marshes.

The productiveness of the soil, assisted by the greater heat and heavier rainfall, is seen in the fact that the manioc, which takes a couple of years at least to come to perfection in Imèrina, is ripe in Màtitànana three months after the slips have been planted.

A plentiful supply of fruit of good quality is produced in the district, and many introduced fruits flourish. Beside the bananas, mangoes, pineapples, and guavas that grow in abundance along the road-sides, grapes, oranges, lemons, and limes, large and luscious, are to be found in several parts of the province, and cocoa-nuts thrive on the coast. The *rofia* palm in the forests, and the *harèfo* rush in the swamps, supply the materials for dress and sleeping mats, while the traveller's-trees, the bamboo, and the pandanus furnish all that is necessary for their unsubstantial houses, and for their plates and spoons.

The rivers abound in fish, and an additional large supply is obtained by the people from the sea, which they navigate in boats of a peculiar construction, which effectually surmount the difficulties of the surf and high rollers, although to an English eye they appear most flimsy and unsafe. The keel is made very deep and long, ending in a high and peculiarly shaped prow, which extends some distance beyond the boat itself. No ribs are used, but the planks, after being bent into the requisite shape by the heat of the sun, are tied in position with withes or creepers. A few thwarts are introduced, also tied into their places; a step is made for a mast; a square sail is formed of plaited rushes or strips of pandanus leaves; and this crazy craft is rendered fit for sea by having its large seams caulked with fibre from the bark of one of the forest trees. The boat, which is about 14 feet long, carries a crew of eight: six men paddle, one steers, and one, whose office is no sinecure, bales out. When a sufficient offing is obtained, the paddlers let down their lines, and the fish caught, generally a fairly good

haul, is divided equally among the eight, as the services of the steersman and baler-out cannot be dispensed with to allow of their fishing. The one must keep the head of the craft to the seas, and unless the other continues his employment a catastrophe would result.

On the extensive prairie land large herds of cattle are kept. These are not, on the average, so good or so large as those in the interior, probably owing to the less nourishing nature of the grass, which is ranker on the coast; and cattle from the interior invariably lose flesh after a short stay on these plains. Sheep and goats do not thrive in the Màtitànana district, and pigs are *fàdy* (tabooed). The Taimoro will neither keep pigs nor eat pork, unlike in one respect the Taifasy and other south-east tribes, who, though making it *fady* to keep pigs, do not object to buying pork in the market and eating it, provided some one else has kept the pig, and killed and prepared it for sale.

Although the Taimoro do not reach the great forest to the west of their territory, there are several by no means insignificant forest tracts within the limits of their district, containing many valuable woods: rosewood, ebony, a species of teak (*híntsy*), and other hard building timber, besides the *nàto*, a red dye-wood, and the *rofia* palm; but no india-rubber is now found in the forests of the Màtitànana.

There are indications that iron, and perhaps other metals, are to be found in this part of the island, but none are worked. All the iron used by these people is brought already smelted and, generally speaking, manufactured into spades, knives, hatchets, etc., from Betsileo, where a great number of the people make a good living by working iron for the Taimoro market. The country is in places covered with volcanic rock, large quantities of lava protruding from the surface, or lying in boulder-like masses on the hill-sides. No gold has been found, although once or twice I have heard rumours of its existence in some of the rivers; but these have turned out to be incorrect.

Trading-posts have for many years been in existence on this coast; but, like the greater part of the coast-line on the east of Madagascar, it is wanting in harbours. The rivers are all entirely or partially blocked up with sand, and vessels are obliged to anchor at a considerable distance from land and work their cargo by decked lighters, which bring the goods through the surf to the beach, where they are landed by hand and carried up to the traders' warehouses.

The river mouth of the Màtitànana is fairly wide and deep, and large boats could, it is believed, be worked through into the quiet water of the river, which is here like a large lake; but it is *fady* for any boat to enter. Foreigners would, if they dared, disregard this *fady*, only that as they are dependent upon the natives here for labour, the latter would no doubt take no care of the boat in entering the passage; and then, if any accident occurred, they would simply disclaim all responsibility. The breaking of the *fady* would, in their minds, account for any mishap, and be a just retribution upon the venturesome foreigner in not regarding with reverence, equal to their own, the taboo of the tribe.

The climate of the Taimòro province is hot and damp, the average monthly maximum temperature in the shade of a Stevensen screen being 87°, with an absolute maximum of 102°, and a direct sun-light register of 164°; the average monthly minimum of the temperature at night for the year being 65°. There can scarcely be said to be a rainy and dry season, except in the sense that heavy thunderstorms are confined to that part of the year corresponding with the rainy season in the interior, from November to April, and that during those months the heaviest rainfall is registered. In February and March the greatest amount of rainfall is registered, amounting in some years from 20 to 24 inches. The annual total rainfall gives over 100 inches. This, with a large preponderance of north-easterly winds, which are warm, and blow along the coast over the lagoons and swamps, render the district very unhealthy both for foreigners and for natives who come from other parts of the country. The flat nature of the country helps the evil, as large swamps, beside the well-known lagoons, exist all along the coast, and in many parts entirely surround the towns. These make fertile rice-plantations, but are hotbeds for the rapid generation of malarial fever, which often assumes a very virulent form on this part of the coast.

Notwithstanding this, the native population is large, indeed it may be said to be dense for Madagascar. I know of no other spot, outside the plain immediately surrounding Antanànarívo, where there is a larger population than in the Taimoro valleys. The villages are not only near together, but are above the average in number of houses; while the families of the Taimoro are larger than those of the majority of Malagasy. This doubtless arises from the higher state of morality existing among these people even before Christianity

was brought to them. All travellers with whom I have had the opportunity of speaking are forcibly impressed with the way the children seem to swarm in the Taimoro villages. The people have intermarried very little with other tribes, and each branch of the tribe has kept itself, to a very great extent, distinct. This, together with the clannish, almost superstitious, reverence for their ancestors and their writings, has kept from the Taimoro many of those evils which have seriously affected the growth of population in other tribes.

The writings just referred to are unique in Madagascar. Called by the people the *Sóra-bè* (or "Great writings"), they constitute, as far as we know, the only books used in the island until Christianity was introduced by the English missionaries. These writings are said to have been brought from Mecca by their ancestors (in the canoe already referred to), who carefully preserved them and handed them down to their children, with the power to read them. This accomplishment is now, whatever it may have been in the early settlement of these people in Madagascar, simply instruction in the Arabic characters, and the mode of forming the characters into words. None of them have now the power of accurately translating or understanding what they read, although many of the passages are committed to memory, and are used on certain occasions as incantations or prayers to God and Mohammed. I have known Taimoro men travel several days' journey, upon hearing of the location of an Arab trader, so as to secure a translation of a passage in some of their books, in order to add to their own importance by an exhibition to their neighbours of their superior knowledge.

A superstitious sacredness is attached to the writing itself, and passages from it are copied on to small pieces of native paper and worn as amulets round the neck. Nearly every child in the tribe has one of these small charms attached to a string round its neck, and carefully preserved from wet or injury by being wrapped in bark and thickly plastered with wax, till it looks something like the long agate beads affected so much by the women of the coast tribes.

The one great desire of all Malagasy women is to become mothers. If any woman of the Taimoro fears that she is likely to be an exception to the general rule—for the majority have large families—she has recourse to one of the scribes and diviners, or priests, as they call them. A portion of the sacred writing is copied upon a piece of white paper

and carefully wrapped in *rofia* fibre. This is held over the smoke of some burning gum used as incense, while a certain formula is recited by the wise men, which takes the form of a blessing and assurance of the consummation desired, rather than of a prayer; after this the document and its covering are enveloped in wax and ornamented with beads; a string is attached, and it is worn like a bead. "Sometimes," naïvely said my informant, "the woman has her wish, and she becomes a mother, and sometimes she does not." In either case, the money or its equivalent has been paid to the diviner, and he at any rate is perfectly satisfied.

In the same fashion almost all the circumstances of life are made to be in some way or other dependent upon the *Sora-be;* and a spurious but most effective sacredness is given to them by the *fady* or taboo which is invariably connected with them. No original copy is ever parted with, though cunning, craft, and avarice have led the keepers to bamboozle some foreigners with ancient-*looking* copies. It is only with difficulty that a sight of the original books (only two, some say three, are in existence) can be obtained; and they are smoke-dried, dirty, torn, and rat-eaten to such an extent as to render them almost useless. There are, however, some very good copies, so it is said, over which great care has been taken to secure accuracy, and almost fabulous amounts are demanded for single copies, which are even then only secured by favour.

They are written upon large sheets of a kind of vegetable parchment made from the bark of one of the forest trees. The bark is stripped from the tree, and after being denuded of the rough outer bark, it is steeped in water until saturated and softened. It is then beaten with mallets or flattened pieces of wood until it is reduced to the proper thickness, It is then firmly pegged on a board and exposed to the sun, which not only dries the bark, but bleaches it. In order to make it ready for the pen, it is washed with a fairly thick size, made of manioc root reduced to powder and boiled in water. After this has dried, the surface of the bark is tolerably smooth, and can be written upon with their pens or a quill with comparative facility. These sheets of bark are then cut into convenient sizes (about quarto) and stitched together into book form, but not rolled.

The pen used is made from a piece of bamboo, treated very much as we do quills, and cut in the same fashion. Quills, however, seem never to have been used by these

people. The ink is a gummy solution of lamp-black and, judging by some of the specimens I have seen, is very durable, as well as of a brilliant blackness.

The utmost care seems to have been taken both with the instruction of the male children in the art of reading and writing the characters, and in the endeavour to secure accurate transcripts of the original books. The scholars are required to rigorously observe the various *fady*, on pain of expulsion from their families and tribe. They are required to abstain from certain foods, such as eels, certain sea fish, pork, etc., and an absolute moral purity is enjoined.

In case of war, or fire, or hurricane, or other event likely to imperil the safety of the *Sora-be*, the keepers answer for their preservation with their lives; if *they* are able to escape the calamity, whatever it may be, they are considered as able to save the sacred books. These must come before considerations of money, property, or family; and hence, through all the disturbances and unrest of a semi-savage state of society, the books have been preserved.

The books, besides being called the *Sora-be*, are also called by the educated (the readers of them), the *Karàna*, evidently a corruption of "Koran." But in the course of generations the actual meaning of the word—as applied to one book—has been to a great extent lost, and is used to represent the various stages or standards through which the students pass. For instance: the normal character or sign of the consonants is called the *Karana vóalòhany*, *i.e.*, the first Karana; the pointing of these consonants with some of the simplest vowels is called the second Karana; while those who are able to read any of the books are said to have mastered the third Karana.

The possession of these books, together with the natural acuteness and exclusiveness of the Taimoro, has secured for them a certain kind of reverence from other tribes, which they have not been slow to turn to their own profit. It is said that the vast majority of the *òdy* (charms) and idols used in the country came from the Taimoro. Even the noted Kèlimalàza, one of the Hova idols destroyed by the late Queen in 1869, came originally from this part of the country, having been captured in one of the wars and taken to Imerina as legitimate spoil. At the present day men travel about the country with reputed *ody*, and secure a good living through the gullibility of the villagers. The mode of operating may be varied to suit different cases, but

here is one method which I can vouch for. A Taimoro, with a design of this sort upon a certain village, goes there disguised as a traveller of some other tribe, and enters, as all travellers are welcome to do, one of the houses he finds occupied, for his mid-day meal. In the course of conversation with his host whom he can easily induce to believe that he has arrived from a place remote from the Màtitànana, he draws from him a few leading particulars relating to the past life of the owner of a house he indicates. Then, having finished his meal, he resumes his journey. But, after getting a sufficient distance, he washes his face, which has been stained, changes his dress, putting on the peculiar long dressing-gown style of robe worn by the Talaotra, and returns to the village, making no secret of his profession, and makes his way to the house indicated to his host of the morning. He takes care that there is a look of comfort and prosperity about the house and owner. He asks and readily obtains quarters for the night, as travellers are always welcome for the sake of their news, which is retailed round the evening fire. The Taimoro takes care to make it be believed that he has never been in that part of the country before, and has seen no one from the district. Then, when the time is ripe, he tells the man all he knows about him, in a careless way:—"Let's see, you lost your father two years ago in the rice-planting time; he was gored by a bull at such and such a place," and so on, till the man, in wonder, asks how he knows all that. It is of course put down to divination, and a good price is secured for the *ody*, which the rascal makes him believe will be just the thing for his household. The fame spreads with morning light, even his host of the previous mid-day is astounded by some pieces of information which he forgets he told the traveller of the previous day; and the end of it is that the cunning fellow leaves, driving before him several cattle, and with money in his loin-cloth in place of the worthless dirty bits of wood he leaves behind him.

I have been able to obtain, through a converted Taimóro, an ancient copy of the sacred book, which, from the difficult, almost secret, way I got possession of it, is peculiarly interesting. It was evidently looked upon by its possessors as authentic and sacred, and they were actuated by no small fear when they were induced to part with it. I have taken considerable trouble to ascertain its actual contents, and after submitting it to several authorities, I at last obtained, at the

British Museum, the information I required. I have been assured that the book is a copy of some portions of the Koran, badly done, as though written from dictation, not transcription, by one who, though familiar with the Arabic characters and their equivalent sounds, yet did not know the language nor the meaning of the words. Said my informant: "Had I not known the original text, I should not have been able to read or translate it; and it is so full of mistakes and repetitions that it would occupy a long time to reduce it to a readable form." The invocation to Allah and Mohammed which precedes the various chapters of the Koran is repeated *ad nauseam*, with but a verse or two intervening; while in the centre of the book are a set of cabalistic signs for use in case of sickness, etc., to be copied on to pieces of paper and then washed off into the water to be drunk by the person who is ill.

It seems strange that these people, who, when they first arrived in the island, were without doubt Mohammedans and in possession of the Koran, should have degenerated into the idol and charm manufacturers they have now become, and that their influence in this direction should be so universally felt throughout the island. For the Taimoro, in small bands, travel the whole length of the land from Fort Dauphin to Anórontsánga, and over to the west to Mènabè. Into every part of the country these idol-makers and charm consecrators make their way, and return with herds of cattle and a good store of money and goods, engaging men *en route* to drive their herds home, when they contemplate a longer stay or a more extended excursion. These absences from home have been known to continue for two or three years, the party bringing or sending home more than a hundred head of cattle and a good round sum in dollars.

Parties of the Taimoro not only migrate for the purpose of selling their *ódy* (charms), but they appear to enjoy the novelty of working for the foreign trader. They have no objection to earning wages from foreigners away from their own country, although they look upon it as derogatory to their pride to labour in the same way for their more wealthy clansmen, or for the traders in their immediate vicinity. Perhaps, as being hired regularly by the month implied under the Hova *régime* freedom from *fanompòana* (unpaid government service), this was another element which induced the Taimoro to prefer to work for the foreigner.

A curious idea of being defiled by contact with other tribes

seems to have a firm hold on these people, so that when they return from having hired themselves to foreigners, they are very particular about bathing and washing their clothes before reaching the Màtitànana. Coming from the north (the usual direction taken by bands of labourers), the last water they pass before arriving at Vóhipéno or its neighbourhood is the River Màngatsihotra. Here they stay for a complete purification, ostentatiously washing their mouths and tongues, if they have indulged in food which is at home considered *fady* (tabooed). They also rub their tongues with an *ody* (said to be poisonous) to take away the effect of any evil words they may have spoken, or any curses they may have uttered against their household or fellow-townsmen.

The manner of a husband's return after a six or nine months' absence is characteristic, and sheds a flood of light upon the usual estimate of conjugal faithfulness. The man does not make for his own house, but enters his father's, until the fact of his return is made known through the village, and in due course to his wife. She then comes to him. There is no particular warmth of welcome or gladness expressed on either side, but the man proceeds, in the presence of the neighbours, to put his wife on oath regarding her fidelity to him during his absence. He then says: "If you have done no evil, then you will submit to the usual ordeal, out of which you will come unhurt and receive our blessing; but if you have been unfaithful, may the crocodiles devour you in the water."

If the woman is willing to submit to the ordeal, she is taken to the river bank, from which she throws herself into the water, and swims ashore. If she comes out unhurt, the man makes her a present of the things he has brought for her from the far country and receives her with gladness and feasting, in which, unfortunately, the rum bottle occupies a conspicuous place. If she either refuses the ordeal, or is bitten during the ceremony never so slightly, the man repudiates her, gives her no present, and she is gazetted throughout the tribe as "a wicked woman, whom no one is to wed for ever."

Unchastity among the young women is said to be almost unknown among the Taimoro, for the fact of unchastity of a young woman becoming known would at once preclude her from obtaining a husband. This is precisely the reverse of the state of things among the unchristianised tribes in the interior, where the possession of a child, though it may be

illegitimate, is looked upon as a strong recommendation to any woman seeking a husband. Unfortunately the same strictness is not exercised towards the young men, and there is a very loose code of morals for them, although they look for the utmost purity in their wives.

The marriage customs of the Taimoro are different in many respects from those of the Hova, both in the initiation and in the ceremonies connected with the wedding. Unlike the Hova, a Taimoro youth chooses his own bride, and tries to win her, in the first instance, without any consultation with parents or relatives on either side. There is also a sense of shame-facedness incident to lovers in other parts of the world, and a dread of being laughed at that leads a youth in making his first onslaught on the heart of the girl upon whom he has set his choice to pay his first visits secretly. He seems to dread the pointed finger and the sneering: "Ah! So-and-so has gone to try and obtain the consent of Miss ——;" the salutation which always assails the ear of any young fellow who is caught making this first call. And the Taimoro lasses know how to coquet with their suitors, so that it is seldom that consent is given in less than a month. This consent at last gained, the bridegroom comes at night and fetches home the bride, who remains in his house a week, before they go formally to ask the consent of the father and mother. This is called the "showing of the woman." Two or three bottles of rum, a half-measure of white rice, and one fowl, are taken as a present to the father and mother of the bride, and, their consent gained, the young couple return home to the house that he has been building during the time the damsel has kept him waiting for his answer. After another week, a further present of money, either a shilling, two shillings, two dollars, or three dollars, with rice, a fowl, and two bottles of rum, are taken to the parents and presented in the presence of two or three witnesses taken by the bridegroom. This they call the "*hamàky vòlana*" or the home-coming. Then once again rice, fowls, and rum are presented, and the marriage ceremonies are complete. The woman is supposed to furnish towards the housekeeping 20 or 30 mats for the floor, a stock of sleeping-mats, 4 or 5 baskets of white rice, one cock, a looking-glass, a calabash of grease, a big cooking-spoon, a tin dipper, and a wooden sifter.

A procession of damsels is formed to bring home the bride and these belongings. When she arrives, she and her atten-

dants circumambulate the house three times before she appears at the east door and salutes those inside with, "Salutations to those who possess separate households!" The man comes out of the house, turns out any of his friends who may be present, and leaves the field clear for the woman and her friends to put the house in order. For two days rum is *fady*, and feasting goes on for a week.

Unfortunately the custom, though elaborate, does not appear to be wonderfully binding, as it is very easy for the woman within a week of her marriage to leave the newly-made husband. But if she stays more than a week, he presents her with two or three dollars, a yard of cotton cloth for a jacket, and a *lamba*, either the striped native cotton one (*arindràno*), or one made of *rofia*. These are hers if she stays with her husband, but if she leaves him, they revert to him. But although it is so easy to leave her husband, it is not so easy to get another, if the first husband is annoyed at the separation, as she is unable to marry again without his consent.

There is another way in which haphazard marriages are contracted when there are a great number of marriageable girls in the tribe. The parents or nearest relatives of the girls take them to the nearest village in which there are some marriageable men, and tell them they are to choose whom they would like for husbands. There appears to be little objection on the part of the young men, and though usually the case, it is not the invariable outcome, that the girl chooses a bachelor. Some appear to prefer those whose reputation as husbands has been tried, and lay claim to the widowers; and it is not out of the question that the girl may choose one who has already one or more wives. There is no feeling of disgrace in being one of several wives. A week is allowed for these newly made couples to ascertain whether or not they can mutually agree to live together for life; and according to their finding at the end of that time, they either separate, or go through the ceremonies mentioned above.

Divorce is terribly easy, as a man simply *misaotra* (=wishes a blessing upon) the woman, and tells her she is no longer his wife, and the deed is done. But by a strange perversity, a woman who is divorced, easy as the process is, remains unmarried, "waiting for the man," as it is called, for even four and five years, and although he may have been married three or four times meanwhile, she is often willing to go back to him as his wife.

Every effort is made by the heads of the tribe to prevent intermarriage with other tribes. If a Taimoro of the Antalaotra division marries into another tribe, or even with a Hova, the one so doing is excommunicated, and is treated as a perfect stranger. The parents refuse to acknowledge them or their children, and they are entirely cut off from the tribe. They are mourned for as dead, and *are* as dead to their parents and kinsfolk. This is said to be the reason why none of the Taimoro women dress in the gay *lamba* affected by the other tribes, or in the soft white *lamba* of the Hova, but only in the rougher and coarser *rofia lamba*. They think that there is more danger of their wives and daughters being carried off by the Hova for their wives if thus dressed, than if their charms are dulled by a common-looking dress. So it is made *fady* for a Taimoro woman or big girl to dress in a calico skirt or *lamba*. The upper part of the body may be covered with a calico jacket, as this is presumably hidden beneath the *lamba*, but the belles seem to make up for the other restriction by wearing the brightest-coloured jackets procurable. But whether the desired end is gained by the *fady* or not, it is certain that there are but few Taimoro women married to men of other tribes, and hence the distinctive peculiarities of the Taimoro have been preserved in a way not found in any other peoples in the island.

If a woman does marry a man of another tribe, or of a branch of her own tribe which is considered beneath her family, a great assembly is called of all the heads of families. Cattle are killed to add importance to the function, and the woman is advised in the public assembly to repudiate her husband. If she does, well and good; but if, after persuasion and threat, she declines, she is advertised as not of them, she is forthwith an outcast and is boycotted. No one will allow her to fetch from their hearths fire to kindle her own; no one will fetch fire from her hearth. If she has a child, no one visits her to congratulate her; no one commiserates with her in case of illness or death. And—the worst thing of all in their estimation—no one will help to bury her when she dies. In no tribe with which I have become acquainted in Madagascar is so much effort made to preserve the tribal distinctions and to keep themselves pure from contamination with other tribes. It is doubtless owing to this that the Taimoro are so peculiarly different from all the other peoples in the island.

Like the Taifasy and other south-east tribes, the Taimoro

bury their dead in a great house built of logs and surrounded by a palisade. The corpses are wrapped in a native *lamba* and laid side by side, and layer upon layer, the women and children on one side of the doorway (which is in the centre of the long side of the house), and the men on the other side. No one is allowed in or near this house or *kibóry*, as it is called, except those appointed by the tribe.

Little or no difference is made in the ceremonies observed at the burial of a king from those at the interment of one of his subjects. But the feasting and number of mourners may be greater, according to the wealth of the individual. One exception, however, is made. When the corpse of a king is carried to the *kibory*, it is not carried on the shoulders, but by the hands and below the knees of the bearers, to show that, although a king when alive, he has no honour above other men when dead. (It is curious that while alive, kings are never dressed in shirt or coat, nor do they wear any kind of headgear, as kings, they say, should not be covered.)

When a Taimoro is approaching death, a number of old women are appointed to perform the last offices, and this they are said to do by hurrying the dying into death, and at once preparing the corpse for burial, and cutting off all the hair over the forehead. Then the scribes of the village assemble in the house, and each of them writes four passages from the sacred books upon separate pieces of bark paper. One of these slips from each scribe is taken and attached to the forehead of the corpse, and one from each on the breast and on each leg. They are then bound on with proper wrappings, that there may be no danger of displacement when the corpse is conveyed for burial. In explanation of this custom they say: "Much evil has been done while here on the earth, so we confess this to the Great Spirit and make supplication for forgiveness." It is also believed to have some power as a charm to preserve the body from decay and annihilation after burial.

The body is carried to its last resting-place, and one of the young men, who has been trained to read and remember some of the words in the books of sacred writings, repeats some passages which are considered suitable for the occasion, although, as with very much of the erudition of the tribe at present as regards their sacred writings, he may not have the remotest idea what the words mean. But they are supposed to contain a prayer to God and his prophet Mohammed for the dead.

At the entrance to the *kibory* a halt is made, and the women and children return home, with the exception of the old women already referred to as performing the last sad rites. These carry fat from the kidney of an ox and fire, and as they enter the gateway a chànt* is repeated seven times by a few of the attendants and followers, after which they all advance into the burial-house and deposit the corpse in its appointed place.

A general mourning is observed in the village for a week, during which time no bathing or cleansing of garments takes place; but on the eighth day all bathe, and the time and appearance of mourning is past, except for the widow, whose time of mourning (and what usually amounts to the same thing—widowhood) is regulated by the relatives of the dead husband, who can, at will, make the time extremely short, or indefinitely prolong the time during which she is unable to become the wife of another.

When a wife dies, the widower remains secluded for a week or perhaps even a fortnight, by which time the relatives of the late wife bring to him his deceased wife's sister or other near female relative of hers as his future wife. This is evidently done as a matter of worldly prudence on the part of the relatives to prevent both the property and the children from passing into the keeping of others than those over whom they have some influence.

Discussion.

The Chairman.—I think I should only be anticipating your wishes by expressing our very hearty and sincere thanks to the Rev. George Shaw for the interesting paper which he has given us. It deals with a subject that I think hardly any of us had much knowledge of before. It is a subject upon which the lecturer is well qualified to speak by his residence in Madagascar and upon which hardly any one could gain knowledge except by living in the place and doing missionary work, I venture to say, among the people.

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* This chant sounds like: *Kibaralà, kibaralà, kilìa, làlañolàla, kibaralà, kibaralà, kibaralà, vòalàlamóndo.*

There are one or two points which seem thoroughly to corroborate what the lecturer said, though not referring actually to Madagascar, but to Arab immigration elsewhere.

It is a known fact that the Arabs seem to have had the power to practise some faculty of immigration, and to have adopted the same customs the lecturer spoke of.

In regard to the custom mentioned of suspected infidelity—"if you have been unfaithful, may the crocodiles devour you in the water"—it is a very curious fact, as stated in Flinders Petrie's *Tales of Madagascar*, that there is a similar tale told; and again, with regard to tearing up pieces of paper and throwing them into water and drinking it, to this day in Upper Egypt frequented by Egyptians you see, in the Temple of Isis, women, who hope to become mothers, scraping the dust out of the hollows and putting it in water and drinking it.

The SECRETARY (Professor E. HULL, LL.D.).—I was struck, on looking at the photographs, by the remarkable difference in the physiognomy of the Christian natives as compared with those of the Arabic natives—namely, the very great improvement in the type of feature of the former.

Mr. MARTIN ROUSE.—Yes, decidedly—in the appearance of the face; there is a cheerful and benign expression in the faces of the Christians.

I think it is very remarkable that these people should abstain not only from eating pork, but also from eating eels and other fish. This must have come originally from the Israelites. I did not know until I read this, that it was an Arab custom according to the Koran (but perhaps some one may confirm this) that they were not only to eat no pork, but no fish that had not fins and scales. It looks as if the Taifâsy were also of Arabic or partially of Arabic origin, but coming at an earlier period into the country, inasmuch as they do not keep pigs; and that is in agreement with another fact that we have read earlier—that whereas the Onjàtsy are treated in the legend as a tribe already there, when these immigrants came from Arabia, the Onjàtsy themselves possess one of the only two remaining copies of the Koran. So there seem to have been Arabian immigrants there prior to the arrival of the Taimoro.

The custom of one set of people in a tribe killing animals for the rest is very curious. The lecturer remarked in the course of

reading his paper that the people so employed resemble the *kosher* butchers of the Jews; but I do not know that such butchers have to belong to a certain family. Is that so? Perhaps some one can inform us. It seems to me, rather, to come down from the most ancient times, when the killing of animals was probably always accompanied by sacrifice: whenever an animal was killed, its blood was poured out on the ground in sacrifice to God. I gather that from several ancient passages in the Scriptures; and I think this is in keeping with it. A certain set of people probably acted as semi-priests; and they alone killed for all the rest, and poured out the blood on their behalf.

It is very remarkable that these people who came from Arabia and professed to worship only the one God should have become the manufacturers of idols for the Malagasy; but we heard in a paper on the Moslems of Arabia how their worship of the one God became blended with the worshipping of holy men, or saints; and with many of their ancient pagan customs; how the Wahâbîs determined to put this down and did so for some time; but how they have themselves returned to the same kind of observances.

Professor ORCHARD, M.A.—There are some points brought before us in the paper which tend to show that some of the customs of these curious tribes are of Israelitish origin; for instance, the prohibition of marriage with other kinds of people and the chant repeated seven times. That seems to convey the idea of number, the Israelites regarding seven as a perfect number. Then on the eighth day the time of mourning is suspended. We know that the Israelites regard the eighth day as the inauguration of a new state of things. So in the New Testament it becomes the first day—the day of the resurrection.

I should like to ask Mr. Shaw whether these names for the days of the week and days of the month have any translatable meaning, or whether they are only mere sounds as far as he is aware.

If they have any meaning it would be interesting to know what they are; and, also, with regard to the chant.

I was much struck with what the author says—"It seems strange that these people who, when they first arrived in the island, were without doubt Mohammedans and in possession of the Koran, should have degenerated into the idol and charm

manufacturers they have now become." It seems to be but another illustration of the fact of the essential depravity of human nature—a depravity which nothing but a new birth, through faith in Christ, has power to cure.

I am sure those of us who have seen the photographs of these people must admit that they by no means lack the appearance of natural intelligence.

The CHAIRMAN.—Before Mr. Shaw answers the questions put to him there are one or two other points which I think we should like to get information on.

I presume the Taimoro were kept in subjection by the Hova; but I do not know how it is now that the Hova supremacy has been, so to speak, knocked on the head, and I believe local disturbances have been created.

Then again with regard to the chant of hired mourners as recorded in Scripture, we know that is a very monotonous thing, and it is the same sharp thin cry emitted by the women simultaneously with slapping their faces and then their breasts and hips, and a stamping sound in rapid succession and the monotony of this magic chant which seem to be very similar. This chant appears to be delivered by the attendants as they deposit the corpse in its appointed resting place.

Rev. G. A. SHAW.—In two or three words I will try to reply to the questions that have been brought forward. I certainly did not mean that the Mpanombily amongst the Taimoro were in exactly the same position as the *kosher* butchers amongst the Jews. I simply referred to that as indicating a separation—that they were the only ones that could kill the animals in such a way as that the tribe would accept, as food, the animals so killed. As I said in the beginning of the paper the highest class, or chiefs, or lords, were called the Mpanombily, which translated into English means those who killed for the rest of the tribe, and inasmuch as the king was very frequently in old times, the priest, it is not at all unlikely that these Mpanombily were also the priests.

Then with regard to the rice, I think it is a matter of notoriety that the redder it is the harder it is. It is a much smaller grain. It is not so pleasant looking, and certainly is not pleasant looking when it is cooked, and in proportion to its hardness, it is so much the more indigestible. When the natives eat a certain portion of

red rice it sustains their strength and prevents their becoming hungry for a longer time.

Then as to the houses—nearly all the houses in the country are built on piles, so as to get as far as possible above the mists and malaria. None of them are built on the ground that I know of; but they all have a flooring of split bamboos put on rafters about 3 ft. 6 in. or 4 ft. from the ground, and in a few instances, if they are chiefs' houses, they may have a second floor above.

As to the Jewish origin of these people I have not made a point of that, though I could have brought forward a great number of points to show in what respects the Malagasy customs resemble the Jewish; but it has always struck me that they came into the country in the same way as the Arabic element came in—that the Arabic element has brought in the Jewish customs; for instance, in killing animals at their feasts, it is a curious thing that at their annual feasts they should always take a wisp of grass and sprinkle the lintel and door-post with the blood of the animals. That is one point, and I could bring forward many others.

With regard to the names of the days of the week and the months of the year, I am not a Malagasy, or able to translate them—my Arabic knowledge does not go far enough. I have given in the second column (the months of the year) the derivations furnished by Mr. Dahle, one of the missionaries in those parts; but so far as the days of the week are concerned I am not sure that they can be translated into English. There is a Malagasy scholar in the room, I believe, who, perhaps, can tell us whether that is so or not.

Then with regard to the sign in the book, I think this mark is on all fours with the marks on the other side. I asked a native teacher the meaning of these and he said he was not sure; but these things serve one of two purposes—they were either put in as marks in order that those who were able to read the characters and words, though not understanding them, or that they might know in what part of the book to look for words suitable to certain occasions. The gentleman to whom I showed this at the British Museum said that some of these were purely cabalistic signs.

In regard to French influence, it would take too long to explain what French influence now means; but I can say whatever it has been in the past, in the present it is having a soothing influence

on the native mind, and things are certainly quieting down in Madagascar both with the tribes, socially amongst themselves and with regard to the government, and Christianizing work is certainly making progress in the island even under the French government, and they are putting no hindrances in the way whatever.

The thanks of those present having been accorded to the author, the meeting adjourned.